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Rural District Council

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE YEAR 1949

CROOK

LINTONS, PRINTERS, CHURCH STREET

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Weardale Rural District Council.

Report of Medical Officer of Health for 1949.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Herewith I beg to submit my Annual Report for 1949.

SECTION A.

Statistics and Social Conditions.

Area of District, 99,652 Acres.

Registrar-General's estimate of population, 9,030.

Number of inhabited houses at end of year 2,966.

Rateable Value, £46,557.

Sum represented by a penny rate, £173. 17. 2.

Employment continued good throughout the year, Wolsingham Steel Works maintained its rate of production, while limestone, ganister and sand quarries have continued with a good rate of production. Lime for agricultural purposes is still produced at Broadwood, Frosterley and Stanhope Dene.

At Stanhopeburn Mine, Messrs. Fluorspar Limited brought the new flotation plant into operation and are maintaining the production. At Rookhope a new flotation plant was being constructed for refining fluorspar for the Weardale Lead Company.

At Stanhope Messrs G. Blair & Co. (Tow Law) Ltd., converted the former food storage depot into a small foundry for the manufacture of light castings.

Wages have maintained their high level and there has been no destitution

Vital Statistics.

BIRTHS

There were 127 total births (alive and still)

Live Births	...	125
Still Births	...	2
		127

LIVE BIRTHS.

		Male	Female
Legitimate	...	74	46
Illegitimate	...	3	2
		77	48

STILL BIRTHS.

Legitimate	...	2	0
Illegitimate	...	0	0
		2	0

On an estimated population of 9,030 these figures give the following rates for 1,000 population:–

Total Births	...	14.06
Live Births	...	13.84
Still Births	...	0.2

The rates for England and Wales were:–

Live Births	...	16.7 per 1,000 population
Still Births	...	0.39 per 1,000 population

The birth rate has risen from 12.6 per 1,000 in 1948. The still birth rate was 0.2 in 1948 and 0.5 in 1947 per 1,000 population.

DEATHS.

The number of deaths registered as pertaining to this district were:—

Males	...	56
Female	...	56
Total	...	112

These figures give a total death rate per 1,000 population of 12.4. The death rate for England and Wales was 11.7 per 1,000 population.

MATERNAL DEATHS

There were no maternal deaths during the year.

INFANTILE DEATHS.

These numbered 1 and were as follows:—

		Male	Female
Legitimate	...	1	0
Illegitimate	...	0	0
Total	...	1	0

These figures give a mortality rate of per 1,000 Live Births of 8, a decrease of 27.

The rate for England and Wales is 32 per 1,000 Live Births.

DEATHS FROM CANCER.

These numbered 23, which represents 20.53 per cent of all deaths and a cancer rate of 2.5 per 1,000 population.

DEATHS FROM MEASLES, Nil.

DEATHS FROM WOOPING COUGH Nil.

DEATHS FROM DIARRHOEA (under 2 years) Nil

CAUSES OF DEATH

	CAUSES OF DEATH	Males.	Females.
	All Causes	56	56
1	Typhoid and Paratyphoid fever ...	0	0
2	Cerebro-spinal fever	0	0
3	Scarlet Fever	0	0
4	Whooping Cough	0	0
5	Diphtheria	0	0
6	Tuberculosis, respiratory	2	1
7	Other Tuberculosis	1	0
8	Syphilitic diseases	0	0
9	Influenza	0	0
10	Measles	0	0
11	Polio-myelitis and Polio-encephalitis ..	0	0
12	Infantile Encephalitis	0	0
13	Cancer of buccal cavity & oesophagus (M)	1	-
	Cancer of uterus (F)	-	0
14	Cancer of stomach & duodenum ...	2	4
15	Cancer of breast	0	2
16	Cancer of other sites	7	7
17	Diabetes	0	0
18	Intra-cranial vascular lesions	6	7
19	Heart disease	15	17
20	Other circulatory diseases	4	3
21	Bronchitis	2	1
22	Pneumonia	2	1
23	Other respiratory diseases	0	1
24	Ulcer of stomach & duodenum ...	0	0
25	Diarrhœa (under 2 years)	0	0
26	Appendicitis	0	0
27	Other digestive diseases	0	1
28	Nephritis	1	2
29	Puerperal & post-abortion sepsis	0	0
30	Other maternal causes	0	0
31	Premature birth	0	0
32	Congen. malformation, birth injury and infantile diseases	0	0
33	Suicide	1	0
34	Road traffic accidents	3	0
35	Other violent causes	2	0
36	All other causes	7	9
	Total	56	56

Appended are the birth rates and death rates for the preceeding seven years:

	Birthrate	Deathrate
1942	12.7	11.2
1943	13.6	13.9
1944	16.7	14.2
1945	11.4	10.8
1946	17.3	14.1
1947	17.3	14,1
1948	12.8	12.3
1949	14.06	12.4

SECTION B.

General Provision of Health Services

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF

MEDICAL.

Medical Officer of Health (part-time)
DONALD THOMSON, O.B.E., M.B.

Tuberculosis Medical Officer
Venereal Diseases Medical Officer
School Medical Officer
Maternity and Child Welfare Medical Officer
Obstetric Consultants
} Under Durham County Council

OTHERS

Sanitary Inspector,
R. G. SUDDICK, Cert. R.S.I., Lond., (whole time)

Health Visitor
Veterinary Surgeon
Public Analyst
} Under Durham County Council.

LABORATORY FACILITIES.

Bacteriological examinations of sputum, throat swabs and blood for diagnosis of Tuberculosis, Diptheria and Typhoid-Fever are carried out at the Public Health Laboratories, Ponteland Road, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 5. In addition other examinations are carried out when necessary, e.g. Examination of urine and faeces and virulence tests. This valuable work is carried out at the expense of the Durham County Council.

Every practioneer in the District can make use of these facilities and a copy of every report is sent to the Medical Officer of Health.

During the year 52 such examinations were carried out.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

The greater part of the district is served through the Ambulance Central Office, Bishop Auckland (Tel. No. Bishop Auckland 810). One Ambulance Car is stationed at St. John's Chapel.

The villages of Hunstanworth and Edmundbyers are served from the Ambulance Central Office at Consett (Tel. No. Consett 411).

At Wolsingham the Wolsingham Steel Company still retain their own ambulance car for the use of their employees and their dependents.

NURSING IN THE HOME.

The whole of the Area with the exception of Stanhope and the sparsely inhabited neighbourhood of Huntstanworth is provided with district Nurse-Midwives, working under local Nursing Associations. These are all affiliated to and subsidised by the Durham County Nursing Association. At Stanhope the general nursing is done by a district nurse, who is not maternity trained. Maternity cases are attended by the County Council Midwife stationed at Frosterley.

At Hunstanworth, a local Association subscibes to the neighbouring association in Northumberland and thus have the services of the Carterway Heads Nurse Midwife when required.

TREATMENT CENTRES.

Maternity and Child Welfare centres are in operation at.Wolsingham, Stanhope and St. John's Chapel. A Venereal Diseases Clinic at Durham and a Tuberculosis Clinic at Bishop Auckland are available for the District. These are all under County Council control.

HOSPITALS.

There is no general hospital in the area. By far the greater part of the cases requiring hospital treatment are sent to the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, which receives a fair amount of support from the District.

In Durham City, Dryburn Hospital and the Durham County Hospital received an increasing number of patients from this district. The General Hospital in Bishop Auckland also receives patients from this area.

SECTION C.

Sanitary Circumstances and General Provisions of Health Services in the Area.

WATER SUPPLIES.

The rainfall in the summer months of 1949 was the lowest for very many years but despite the prolonged drought no serious shortage of water arose in the Councils area of supply.

The following improvements were carried out:—

Frosterley - Extension of 3in. main to serve new housing estate, a distance of approx 200 yards.

Stanhope - Extension of 3in. main to serve new housing estate, a distance of approx 250 yards.

St. John's Chapel-Extension of 3in, main to serve new housing estate, a distance of approx 50 yards.

At the request of the South-West Durham Hospital Management Committee, a new 3in. water main was laid to the Horn Hall Sanatorium, Stanhope, a distance of approximately 100 yards.

Repairs to mains and services were carried out by your workmen on 129 instances.

SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE.

Minor improvements were effected to the various sewage works during the year, including digging over and re-levelling land used for treatment, re-arrangement of feeder channels and clearing and relaying land drains.

37 stoppages in sewers and 24 in drains were cleared by your workmen during the year.

RIVERS AND STREAMS.

Complaints were investigated in company with the County Health Inspector.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

The closets of each type at the end of the year were:-

Water. Closets	...	1448
Ashclosets	...	854
Ashpit-Privies	...	276

Fifteen applicants took advantage of the Council's scheme allowing a grant of half the cost, up to maximum of £8, for converting existing sanitary accommodation to the water carriage system, 20 closets being converted.

PUBLIC CLEANSING.

SALVAGE.

The collection of salvage continued during the year until difficulty in disposing of the material was experienced. 14 tons. 2 cwts. 3 qrs of waste paper was sold.

REFUSE REMOVAL.

Apart from the outlying properties, the greater part of your area is now covered by the Cleansing Service,

The estimated weight of refuse removed during the year was 3750 tons and the mileage covered by the Cleansing Vehicles was 18,406. The total cost of the Cleansing Services during the year was £3528.

Credits from various sources including the sale of salvaged materials was £29.

Refuse was disposed of on controlled tips at Frosterley Thornley Village, Crawleyside, Cowshill and Rookhope.

RATS & MICE DESTRUCTION ACTS.

The Rodent Operator has been fully engaged during the year. Treatment of sewers and refuse tips was given periodically and systematic block control of properties was undertaken.

Summary of year's work:—

	Number of Baiting points	Number of "takes"	Estimated kills per Ministry Formula
Sewers	323	39	145
Sewage Works	54	26	195
Refuse Tips	84	58	465
Houses etc.	845	418	3240

Similar treatment was carried out for Tow Law Urban District Council by arrangement between the two Council's.

SHOPS ACT - Ventilation and Temperature.

The usual inspections have been carried out and no action was found necessary.

ICE CREAM.

Inspections were carried out in connection with applications for licence to store and sell ice-cream.

SMOKE ABATEMENT.

The district is fortunate in having few industries of the type usually associated with smoke nuisance and no action was found necessary during the year.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF AREA.

Nature of Inspections	Number	Notices Informal	Formal	Complied with
Infectious Diseases	14	0	0	0
Disinfection	15	0	0	0
Nuisances	6	6	0	6
Dwellings	105	10	0	10
Cowsheds	23	5	0	5
Sanitary Accommodation	28	9	0	9
Water Supply	78	1	0	1
House Drainage	28	6	0	6

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

(a) Milk Supply,

On 1st October 1949 the administration of the Milk and Dairies Orders came under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Up to that date inspections were carried out in collaboration with County Officials and samples of milk were taken on eight occasions after premises had been certified as suitable for producing "Designated" milk.

Inspections were also carried out in connection with application for registration to produce ordinary raw milk.

(b) Meat and Other Foods,

No slaughtering for sale is done in the district under existing conditions.

Visits have been carried out to shops and stores in the district and these are generally well kept.

Food was condemned as unfit for sale for human consumption on 18 instances, In each case the food was surrendered voluntarily under Ministry of Food Regulations,

There are five bakehouses in the district, These are clean and satisfactory.

DISEASES OF ANIMALS ACTS.

Anthrax Order of 1938.

Notification of one case of Anthrax was received during the year and disinfection was carried out in conjunction with the Police Authorities.

MORTUARY.

Part of the store-house building at the Council Offices was adapted for use as a mortuary and completed during the year.

SECTION D.

HOUSING.

(a) By Contract,

24 traditional type houses were completed and occupied during the year under the Council's Housing Programme:

Wolsingham	...	6
Westgate	...	14
St. John's Chapel	...	4

30 houses were also under course of construction, namely 8 at Stanhope, 4 at Frosterley and 18 at Wolsingham.

The contract for the erection of 40 houses at Paragon Street, Stanhope had also been let.

(b) Direct Labour.

The Council undertook the erection of Airey Type Rural Houses, viz: 8 at Rookhope; 20 at Frosterley and 14 at Stanhope. Of these the 8 at Rookhope and 14 at Frosterley were completed and occupied during the year. Work on the remaining 20 houses was well advanced at the end of the year.

Preparation of housing sites by the provision of roads and sewers was well advanced at Rookhope, Wolsingham, Frosterley, Stanhope Westgate and St. John's Chapel.

The total number of houses provided under the Council's housing programme in the post-war period by the end of the year is 81.

(c) Private Enterprise,

Three houses at Lydgate Lane, Wolsingham were completed and occupied and three new dwellings (2 at Wolsingham and one at Eastgate) were in course of erection at the end of the year,

Work was also in progress on the conversion and adaptation of other properties into dwelling-houses in three instances,

SECTION E.

Prevalence of, and control over, Infectious Disease.

I received 228 notifications during the year, these were as follows:—

Disease.	Total cases notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Deaths
Smallpox	0	0	0
Scarlet fever	11	11	0
Pneumonia	2	0	3
Measles	184	0	0
Diphtheria	1	1	0
Erysipelas	3	0	0
Whooping Cough	21	0	0
Para-Typhoid Fever	0	0	0
Puerperal Fever	0	0	0
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	0	0
Meningitis	3	3	0
Poliomyelitis	2	2	0
Total	228	17	3

As a result of the heavy epidemic of measles the County School at Wolsingham was disinfected at the request of the Education Authorities.

DIPTHERIA IMMUNISATION,

Records of Immunisations done are sent direct to the Durham County Council Health Department and our records as to the state of immunity are therefore incomplete.

There was one case of Diptheria in this district during the year.

TUBERCULOSIS.

Age Periods.	New Cases.				Deaths.			
	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0								
1								
5								
15	2							
25				2				
35	2	3				1		
45	2		1				1	
55	2				1			
65 and upward ...	1				1			
Totals ...	9	3	1	2	2	1	1	0

In ail 15 notifications were received, Of these, 12 were for Tuberculosis of the Lungs and 3 were for Tuberculosis of other parts of the body.

Of the 4 deaths due to Tuberculosis 3 were the result of Tuberculosis of the Lungs and 1 was of Tuberculosis of Kidney,

The Tuberculosis Death rate for the year was 0.44 per 1,000 population.

I am,

Yours obedientiy,

DONALD THOMPSON.